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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

+ Secretary-General tells Security Council that Burundi crisis merits preventive action, but Government does not want United Nations deployment and Organization does not want forceful intervention; asks countries with military presence in Zaire not to withdraw.

+ Secretary-General foresees United Nations presence in Rwanda for years; asks Commission of Experts to report soon with view to establishing international tribunal.

+ In report to Security Council, Secretary-General says Somalia's leaders should be given more time to pull country back from abyss; recommends extension of UNOSOM II mandate to 31 October and gradual reduction in troop levels.

+ United Nations Technical Team in Mexico (ETONU-MEX) helps non-governmental organizations prepare for presidential election on Sunday.

+ Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Mirgratory Fish Stocks completes review of dispute settlement provisions in revised negotiating text.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today told the Security Council that there was a serious crisis in Burundi which merited preventive action. Special Adviser Alvaro de Soto said the Secretary-General made no concrete proposals, but suggested that those countries with a military presence in neighbouring Zaire should not withdraw "just in case."

The Secretary-General had contacted the Government of Burundi with a view to establishing a United Nations presence in Bujumbura to help deter "an explosion of Rwandese proportions," Mr. de Soto said. However, the Government had been unwilling to request such a measure. At the same time, the

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international community was unwilling to intervene in the country under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The Organization was thus faced with a major dilemma.

Mr. de Soto went on to say that a range of options were being contemplated: deploying United Nations guards or human rights observers; reinforcing the existing humanitarian presence in Burundi; augmenting the Special Representative's staff; and convening a regional conference to discuss the situation. Those options were not mutually exclusive, he added.

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The United Nations will probably have to maintain its presence in Rwanda for years if the country is to recover from its ordeal, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He told the Security Council today that military personnel would be needed in addition to humanitarian workers in view of security conditions there.

The Secretary-General thanked France for its courageous action in launching Operation Turquoise, which had saved thousands of lives and galvanized the international community. However, the situation in the protection zone was still difficult, and there would be new problems to confront when refugees and displaced persons returned home. He expressed hope that the new Government in Kigali would not contribute to the "crisis of confidence" in Rwanda.

The Secretary-General said he had asked the Commission of Experts investigating major human rights violations in Rwanda to report to him quickly with a view to establishing an international tribunal. He noted that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) had deployed 2,564 peace-keepers as of today, adding that the total would soon rise when the Ethiopian contingent was fully deployed. However, he pointed out that the Council had authorized a 5,500-strong Mission.

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The United Nations should give Somali leaders a little more time to cooperate in bringing their country back from the abyss, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report to the Security Council dated 17 August, he said continued international support for Somalia depended on their resolve to achieve political compromise. He recommended that the Council consider extending the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) for one month until 31 October, to allow time for action on a report he would submit by 15 October. While it was too early to conclude that the Operation could not achieve its aims, the omens were not promising.

The Secretary-General pointed out that progress towards national reconciliation, security and stability had not matched humanitarian gains in Somalia. Delays by the factions in implementing agreements called into question their commitment to peace. Moreover, the prospects for rehabilitation and reconstruction were limited because the lack of political

progress sapped donor interest. Conflicts within the dominant Hawiye clan -- to which Mr. Ali Mahdi and General Mohammed Farah Aidid belonged -- constituted the major obstacle to national reconciliation. UNOSOM II should help convene a Hawiye conference by the end of September.

Acting on recommendations by the recent Special Mission to Somalia, the Secretary-General said UNOSOM II's strength should be reduced to 17,200 troops before October, and thereafter to 15,000. The Operation would be unable to implement its current mandate below that level. He warned that any hasty and large-scale reduction could imperil security conditions in Somalia.

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The United Nations Technical Team in Mexico (ETONU-MEX) has been helping local non-governmental organizations to prepare for Sunday's presidential election. The Team is providing technical support for electoral observation and a quick count, drawing on United Nations experience with electoral assistance missions in almost 50 countries. It will not evaluate or comment on the elections themselves or on the outcome.

The extent of the assistance provided to non-governmental organizations varies according to their prior experience and the resources available from the United Nations Electoral Assistance Fund. They must also meet such requirements as impartiality, pluralism, professionalism and transparency. Observation activities should cover the entire electoral process and not be restricted to election day, and coverage should be sufficiently representative for findings to be relevant.

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The United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks today completed its review of dispute settlement provisions in its Chairman's revised negotiating text. It also dealt with provisions on non-participants in regional fisheries organizations, and began reviewing the section on developing States' special needs.

The Conference has been mandated by the General Assembly to find solutions to problems relating to high seas fisheries, with particular reference to conservation and management. The negotiating text being reviewed will provide the basis of a future instrument.

In today's debate, the Russian Federation warned that clear and quick dispute-settlement procedures were needed to prevent ugly incidents over fishing activities on the high seas. The Conference should not limit such procedures to those included in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The United States said members of regional organizations should be allowed to adopt their own settlement procedures or to follow the Convention.

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